Amendments To the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any cancelled claims at a later date.

1.-7. (cancelled)

8. (new) A method for interchanging data between an external device and applications installed on a plurality of network elements of a packet-switching network using a tunnel connection, wherein each network element is connected to a network node device, and wherein the network node device is involved in the tunnel connection, the method comprising:

      assigning to a network-end terminal point of the tunnel connection a globally unique address, wherein the network node device forms the network-end terminal point of the tunnel connection if a plurality of network elements jointly use of the tunnel connection; and

      setting up the tunnel connection and forming the network-end terminal point of the tunnel connection by a network element if the network element requires a global address for executing an application, wherein the tunnel connection is exclusively used by the network element, wherein

      all data are routed through the network node device, and wherein

      the network node device is a terminal point or a data-routing entity of the tunnel connection.

9. (new) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the tunnel connection is a connection which operates on the basis of the PPTP tunneling protocol and which transmits the data in a tunneled connection without influence.

10. (new) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the network elements are computers and the external device is an Internet service provider connected by a DSL modem.

11. (new) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the computers are Personal Computers.

12. (new) The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the network elements are computers and the external device is an Internet service provider connected by a DSL modem.

13. (new) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the network elements have associated local addresses which are unique only in the packet-switching network.

14. (new) The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the network elements have associated local addresses which are unique only in the packet-switching network.

15. (new) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the network elements have associated local addresses which are unique only in the packet-switching network.

16. (new) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the network node device is a router which has an entity for setting up and operating a PPTP tunnel connection.

17. (new) The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the network node device is a router which has an entity for setting up and operating a PPTP tunnel connection.

18. (new) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the network node device is a router which has an entity for setting up and operating a PPTP tunnel connection.

19. (new) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the network node device is a router which has an entity for setting up and operating a PPTP tunnel connection.

20. (new) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the network node device is alternately a terminal point or a data-routing entity of the tunnel connection.

21. (new) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the network node device is simultaneously a terminal point and a data-routing entity of the tunnel connection.

22. (new) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the network node device is a terminal point or a data-routing entity of a plurality of tunnel connections.

23. (new) A network node device involved in interchanging data using at least one tunnel

connection between an external device and applications installed on a plurality of network elements of a packet-switching network, wherein

each network element is connected to a network node device, wherein

a network-end terminal point of the tunnel connection has a uniquely allocated global address, wherein

the network node device forms the network-end terminal point of the tunnel connection if a plurality of network elements jointly use the tunnel connection, wherein,

if a network element requires a global address for executing an application, the network element sets up the tunnel connection and forms the network-end terminal point of the tunnel connection, wherein

the tunnel connection is configured to be exclusively used by the network element, and all data are routed through the network node device.